

City Department Engagement Task Force

Draft Final Report

Of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission

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Summary

The Task Force met over a 15 month period in 2011 and 2012. The work included reviewing various studies on community engagement, including those prepared by the City; review of engagement practices in other cities; and meeting staff of City Departments to explore current engagement techniques using various projects as case studies.

Through this process the Task Force developed recommendations in the areas of resident notification, training and evaluation.

Recommendations

Resident Notification

1. Expand public notification on City projects, land use cases, and policy review to include all residents. Currently, on many projects and land use cases, only property owners are notified.
2. In addition to the current practice of notifying neighborhood organizations, all business associations likely to be affected by a project or land use action should be notified.
3. Ensure public notices comply with all ADA requirements.
4. Improve access to translation services.
5. Establish standardized requirements for when to have multiple languages on public notices.

6. Provide opt-in subscription functionality for land use applications by location (defined geographically or by neighborhood) via GovDelivery or other emerging technologies.
7. Continue to close the digital divide among residents and in communities to improve public access to information promulgated electronically or via the internet.

Training in Engagement Techniques.

8. Provide additional staff training on engagement techniques.
9. As much as possible, attempt to standardize engagement practices across all City Departments.
10. Educate neighborhood organizations and residents on the statutory requirements and processes involved in land use decisions and where public input best affects the outcome of the decision.
11. Create consistency among neighborhoods involved and quality of feedback received, including:
 - a. Capacity building within neighborhood organizations to ensure all residents have an active neighborhood organization that can receive and disseminate notices.
 - a. Provide education and training to neighborhood organizations on process for review of land use applications to improve understanding and allow the organizations to support neighborhood residents in addressing concerns.
 - b. Develop methods to monitor and evaluate performance of neighborhood organizations in this area (e.g. use of Community Participation Program funding).

Evaluation of Engagement

12. Review and update the City's Community Engagement checklist integrated into department processes.
13. Monitor and evaluate the use of community engagement practices throughout City departments.

Task Force Charge

In December 2010 the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Task Force established the Community Department Engagement Task Force and gave the Task Force the following charge:

To investigate, evaluate and report back to the NCEC as it looks at how community engagement factors into the entire City of Minneapolis enterprise and service delivery model. The Task Force will assist the NCEC in meeting its charges from the City Council/Mayor in Resolution No. 2008R-402, including but not limited to: "Advise the Mayor and City Council on development or improvement of community participation policies, delivery of services and decision-making processes to systematize community input into City processes; and, "Provide feedback to City Departments regarding community participation and the City's adopted Community Engagement Principles..." The Task Force should include in its scope certain City Programs as recommended by Commissioner Mark Hinds at the NCEC meeting held 9/28/10. The Task Force would complete investigation and evaluation, regularly report back to the full NCEC, and complete a final draft report of Findings and Recommendations for the NCEC within its 2-year duration, for probable policy and procedure (action item) recommendations to the City Council and Mayor.

The Task Force began work in January 2011 with a goal of completing work by December 2012. The group was able to complete its charge ahead of schedule. A report, including a series of recommendations was presented to the full NCEC in May 2012.

Process

The Task Force has held nine meetings. Initially the task force reviewed previous policies and studies, including:

- Specific purpose of the Task Force.
- The City Council's equity directive for neighborhood funding.
- Review of recent studies and reports on community engagement practices in City.
- Review of current engagement practices of City departments.
- Review of new community engagement policy of Minneapolis Park Board.
- Review of engagement policies in other cities.

The basis for the work of the Task Force is the Core Principles of Community Engagement developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and adopted by the Minneapolis City Council in 2007:

1. Right to be involved – Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

2. Contribution will be thoughtfully considered - Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will be thoughtfully considered.

3. Recognize the needs of all - Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.

4. Seek out involvement - Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.

5. Participants design participation - Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.

6. Adequate information - Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

7. Known effect of participation - Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Included in the review of past studies of community engagement by the City enterprise was the 2005 *Community Engagement Process-Model Guidebook for City Departments* developed by the Minneapolis Department of Communications. This document provided a model for effective engagement which is shown in Appendix 1. The *Guidebook* also provided a checklist for departments to follow in seeking engagement on policies and projects.

Success Factors

The Task Force established success factors which serve as indicators of successful engagement between residents and the City. These include:

Primary Success Factors

1. Neighborhood organization and community members know where to look to engage and participate in city processes and know how their input is used (or not used)
 - a. "I have a problem; I can easily determine who will help me resolve this"
 - b.City staff member: "I have the tools, knowledge, and ability to constructively engage the community."
 - c. "I have an idea and I know how I can bring it forward."
2. Completed select number of test cases
3. Neighborhood organizations and community members are able to understand what actions will affect their neighborhood and how to influence the actions.

Secondary Success Factors

- Document how the city does community engagement (secondary)

- Roadmap to change the city culture (secondary)
- Identify and document best practice of community engagement (secondary)

Long Term Goal

"We understand the city's culture of engagement and we have a roadmap to improve the engagement."

Case Studies

The Task Force examined various projects and processes of City departments as case studies to better understand current engagement practices and develop recommendations for improvement. Case studies examined to date are:

Public Works Department -18th Avenue NE Trail. This bicycle trail project in Northeast Minneapolis involved over three years of planning and construction. The Task Force reviewed the process of notifying residents and neighborhood organizations in the project area. Recommendations in this area include:

- The need for a standard notification procedures;
- The need to more formally engage neighborhood organizations;
- Notification of neighborhood meetings should be made from the department managing the project and not solely from the area councilmember.

CPED/Planning - Planning Variance Cases. The Task Force studied the recent variance granted for the Blue Door Restaurant in the Longfellow Neighborhood as a case study for similar variances. The focus of the review was the process for notifying residents and neighborhood organizations on planning cases. Findings include:

- Provide opt-in subscription functionality for land use applications by location (defined geographically or by neighborhood) via GovDelivery;
 - Ensure public notices comply with ADA requirements;
 - Increase font size on public hearing and similar notices;
1. Educate residents on the statutory requirements and processes involved in land use decisions and where public input best affects the outcome of the decision;

2. Create consistency amongst neighborhoods involved and quality of feedback received, including:
 - b. Capacity building within neighborhood organizations to ensure all residents have an active neighborhood organization that can receive and disseminate notices.
 - c. Provide education and training to neighborhood organizations on process for review of land use applications to improve understanding and allow the organizations to support neighborhood residents in addressing concerns.
 - d. Develop methods to monitor and evaluate performance of neighborhood organizations in this area (e.g. use of Community Participation Program funding);
5. Expand notification to include all residents (current only property tax payers are notified) and to include registered business associations;
6. Increase of ease of access to translation;
7. Establish standardized requirements for when to have multiple languages;
8. Review and update the City's Community Engagement checklist integrated into department processes;
9. Monitor and evaluate the use of community engagement practices throughout City departments.
10. Continue to close the digital divide among residents and in communities to improve public access to information promulgated electronically or via the internet.

Department of Health and Family Support (HFS) - Healthy Living Program. Staff from HFS described the engagement strategies used in the Healthy Living Program and other work of the department. Findings and recommendations include:

- Health and Family Support has extensive experience working with typically under engaged populations, such as immigrant communities. The best practices developed in this work should be documented and shared with other departments.
- Greater outreach to neighborhood organizations is necessary in some programs.
- In Health programs, as well as other projects and programs in City departments, there is a need to develop measures of effectiveness for engagement efforts.

Regulatory Services Department – Notification Processes. The Task Force reviewed the notification procedures used by the Department for razing structures and liquor licensing. Recommendations include:

- Consistent practices for notifying and interacting with small businesses should be developed.
- Hearings on liquor licenses and similar actions should be held in the neighborhoods in which the business is located.'
- Notices of regulatory actions, such as demolition of structures, should be sent to all residents, including renters.

Police- Crime Prevention Program. Crime prevention staff presented the various outreach strategies used to establish block clubs. This included discussion of the most effective techniques. Findings and ecommenations included:

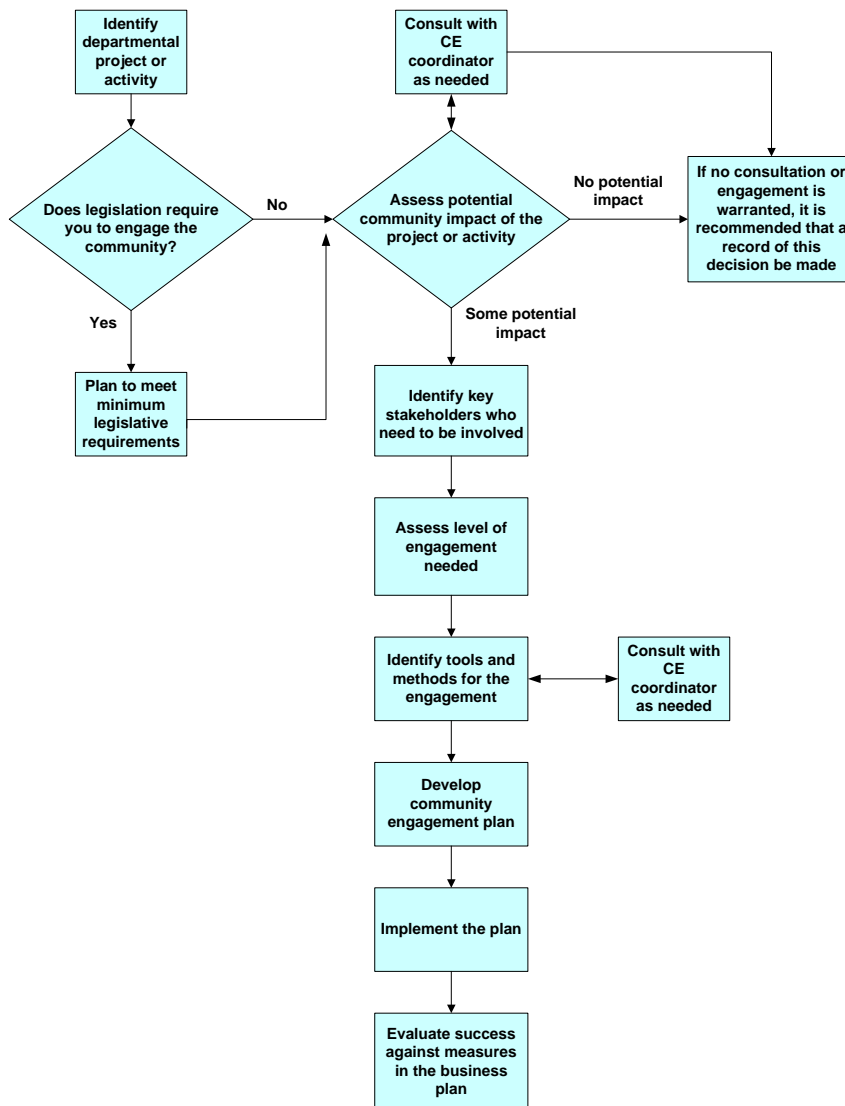
- Improve coordination between crime prevention block clubs and neighborhood organizations.
- Although growing use of social media facilitates outreach to block clubs, it will remain necessary to meet people in person.
- 311 should have an expanded role in linking residents to block clubs and neighborhood organizations.

Hennepin County Public Works Hennepin County Public Works staff were also contacted about engagement practices used by the County.

Appendix 1

The Community Engagement Process Model

The CE Process Model (and associated tools) is designed to provide departments with a consistent process to follow when evaluating projects or activities that involve decision making that will affect stakeholders. This does not mean that each department has to pursue the same type of engagement methods. The CE Process Model allows each department the freedom and creativity to customize the decision making and engagement process as needed. It will, however, ensure a standard approach to engagement and community involvement in decision making.



Appendix 2

Checklist for Community Engagement

Do we have:

- ☐ Organizational commitment to engagement and to the outcomes derived?
- ☐ Mechanisms and resources to document the full extent of the engagement?
- ☐ Adequate time for engagement built into project timelines?
- ☐ A shared understanding, from all parties involved, of the scope and objectives of the engagement?
- ☐ An understanding from all stakeholders of what is negotiable and open to change and what is not.
- ☐ Agreement from all parties concerned as to whether the focus is on gaining agreement on the process for engagement or on the outcome of the engagement process?
- ☐ The ability to coordinate information and actions across the organizations involved.
- ☐ Relevant information that is readily accessible to all members of the community – including information on the issue and on the engagement process?
- ☐ The financial and technical resources to undertake the engagement?
- ☐ Practical/logistical matters identified and resourced?
- ☐ Appropriately skilled human resources to undertake the engagement?
- ☐ Open and accountable processes that can withstand public scrutiny?
- ☐ Community understanding of the level of input expected of them?
- ☐ Opportunities for engaging the community in debate on the issue?
- ☐ All potential stakeholders identified?
- ☐ Adequate publicity in place to ensure all potential stakeholders are aware of the engagement?

- ☐ An understanding of possible barriers to public participation and appropriate strategies in place?
- ☐ Mechanisms in place for monitoring the engagement process and the organizational flexibility to make changes if required?
- ☐ Strategies in place for evaluating feedback from the engagement?
- ☐ Strategies in place for providing feedback to participants?
- ☐ A clear understanding with stakeholders regarding their level of involvement in implementation of outcomes?
- ☐ An evaluation of the consultation process built into project timelines?